IMPLICIT BIAS
Defining Implicit Bias

**Implicit bias** refers to the *attitudes* or *stereotypes* that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an *unconscious* manner.

As opposed to **explicit bias**, which are attitudes held at a *conscious* level.

Blair, 2002; Rudman, 2004; Staats & Patton, 2013
“If you can read this paragraph, it’s because our minds are very good at putting together pieces of information in a way that is easy for us to make sense of. Our minds do this automatically, without conscious control.”
List the five people in your inner circle
Defining Implicit Bias

The implicit associations we hold arise outside of conscious awareness; therefore they do not necessarily align with our declared beliefs or even reflect stances we would explicitly endorse.

-Kirwan Institute
Defining Implicit Bias

- Implicit biases are **pervasive**. Everyone possesses them, even people with avowed commitments to impartiality such as judges.

- Implicit and explicit biases are **related but distinct mental constructs**. They are not mutually exclusive and may even reinforce each other.

- The implicit associations we hold **do not necessarily align with our declared beliefs** or even reflect stances we would explicitly endorse.

- Implicit biases are **malleable**. Our brains are incredibly complex, and the implicit associations that we have formed can be gradually unlearned through a variety of debiasing techniques.
Defining Implicit Bias

Much of the literature suggests that these biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated unconsciously, involuntarily and/or without one’s awareness or intentional control.

-Kirwan Institute
Where did the bias go?

“a clear majority of Americans were telling pollsters in the early 1980s... that they opposed race discrimination in nearly all its forms... there is no reason to believe that most of them were lying”

(Michelle Alexander, 2010)
The Implicit Association Test

An indirect way to measure social attitudes, that does not depend on self-reporting, the IAT is an association test that is based off the idea that making a response is easier when closely related items are on the same key
Impact of Implicit Bias

“Biases that we do not acknowledge but that persist, unchallenged, in the recesses of our minds, undoubtedly shape our society”

-Rudman, 2004
Impact of Implicit Bias

In a 500,000 participant study, Nosek et al., 2009 showed that 70% of participants associated science with male and that this measure of implicit gender stereotypes predicted the achievement gap in science among 8th graders.
The IAT also predicted

- Voting Decisions (Acruri et al., 2008)
- Quality of Medical Care (Green et al., 2007)

In fact, research has show that implicit biases are better predictors of behavior than explicit biases that are self reported (even when negative biases are self-reported!)

(Agerstrom & Rooth, 2011; Hehman et al., 2017)
People aren’t just hiding their true beliefs

We hold these negative implicit attitudes even about groups whose identities we share

The Kirwan Institutes IAT data has indicated that about 80% of white Americans have anti-black implicit bias, but so do about 40% of African-Americans.
Where do Implicit Biases come from?

- Social Media
- Observance of disparities between social groups
- Personal experience
A young man walks through chest deep flood water after [looting](#) a grocery store in New Orleans on Tuesday, Aug. 30, 2005. Flood waters continue to rise in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina did extensive damage when it [会影响到](#).

Two residents wade through chest-deep water after finding bread and soda from a local grocery store after Hurricane Katrina came through the area in New Orleans, Louisiana. (AFP/Getty Images/Chris Graythen)
We see difference, and Subtle social conditioning tries to tell us why

And personal experience can confirm or challenge our beliefs.
Implicit Bias is socially self-sustaining

- It impacts whose emails we respond to (Milkman, Akinola, & Chugh, 2012)
- What level we expect people to perform at (van den Bergh et al., 2010)
- Who we are comfortable teaching (Jacoby-Senghor et al., 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Race and Gender</th>
<th>Emails Ignored</th>
<th>Meetings Ignored</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>% Increase Relative to Caucasian Males</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caucasian Male</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian Female</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Male</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black Female</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic Male</td>
<td>36.9%</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic Female</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese Male</td>
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<td>38.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Female</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
<td>77.0%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Implicit Bias and the Hiring Committee

- In a study where both CVs were exactly the same, the male applicant was rated better in all categories. This pattern held true for both men and women reviewers (Steinpreis et al., 1999)

- Female applicants productivity score had to be significantly higher to receive the same peer review application as a male (Wennerås and Wold, 1997).
John vs. Jennifer
Implicit Bias and the Hiring Committee

Which is more important? Book smarts or street smarts?
Preventing Implicit Bias From Impacting decision making

■ Recognize that you have bias

■ Create a plan
  • *Have clear, fact based reasons for all decisions you make*
  • *Ask the right questions – avoid pre-judgment of facts in the creation of your questions*
  • *Make decisions in the right frame of mind*
  • *Hold each other and yourself accountable in a compassionate way*
  • *Be on the look out for common decision making short cuts that let implicit bias take the wheel*
Creating Criteria

- Make sure your criteria are fair and are actual indicators of success – Wightman 1998 showed that the LSAT and undergraduate GPA were not predictors of bar performance, but Law School GPA was.

- An elite institution may not be as good of a predictor as the work that was done in the field after graduation.

- Think critically about why a certain experience or quality has potential to make someone successful.
Be on the look out for Short Cuts

- Cloning
- Snap Judgments
- Negative Stereotypes
- Positive Stereotypes
- Elitist Behavior
- Wishful Thinking
- Euphemized Bias
Create space and energy for decision-making

Judges have been shown to grant more parole requests immediately after meal breaks than before

(Danziger et al. 2011)
Making the Decision

- Avoid prematurely labeling any party as the “most credible” until you have done a credibility analysis.

- Focus on specific facts when considering the credibility of someone’s statements – do not use sex stereotypes or myths about complainants or respondents to determine whether or not you think a statement is credible.
  - For example, DO NOT assume that a respondent is less credible because “they have more on the line and have an incentive to lie.” Formal investigations and hearings are high stakes for ALL involved, not just one party or the other.
Thank you!